(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) No formal assurance has been given by the Prime Minister to INS in solving major newspapers industries issues.

(b) Does not arise.

Pension scheme for NRIs

1708. SHRI THENNALA G. BALAKRISHNA PILLAI: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal for any type of pension scheme for NRIs; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Proposal for E-Governance initiatives in rural areas

1709. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with Government to promote e-governance initiatives in rural parts of the country;

(b) if so, how far would it be helpful to farmers to sell their produce at best possible rates; and

(c) the time-frame for the completion of the project with financial allocation, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is preparing a mission mode project for e-Governance at the Gram Panchayat level under the National e-Governance plan. It is envisaged that this will enable all Panchayats in the country to progressively obtain the benefits of Information Technology in implementing e-Governance solutions with reference to identified services delivered at the Panchayat level.

(c) The time-frame and financial allocations for the projects are being worked out.

Review meetings of Panchayati Raj System

†1710. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the Ministers whose meetings were called by the Central Government during the year 2003-06 for reviewing the Panchayati Raj System alongwith the dates of these meetings;

(b) the details of the decisions taken mainly in these meetings;

(c) the details of the decisions out of the above which could not be implemented; and

(d) the details of assessment of the success of the Panchayati Raj in Chhattisgarh?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj was set up on 27 May, 2004. Prior to creation of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, a conference of State Ministers of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj was held on 27th and 28th January, 2003 under the auspices of Ministry of Rural Development. In this conference the States were urged to ensure speedy devolution of funds, functions and functionaries and empower the Gram Sabhas. After the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was set up, a Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in charge of rural development and Panchayati Raj on "Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj" was organized in New Delhi on 29-30 June 2004, jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Issues relating to effective implementation of Part IX and IX A of the Constitution on Panchayati Raj were tabled as the agenda for discussions by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. In this Conference, a decision was taken to hold seven Round Table Conferences to formulate a draft action plan towards achieving the objective of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to emerge as institutions of self-government for the planning and implementation of programmes of economic development and social justice as envisioned in the Constitution.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.